



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

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Shana Jones, Special Assistant
Daryl Fields, Public Affairs Officer
610 N.W. Loop 410
San Antonio, Texas 78216
(210) 384-7440

**TWO WACO RESIDENTS ARRESTED AND CHARGED FOR DEFRAUDING FEMA
DURING HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF EFFORTS**

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that federal authorities arrested two individuals charged with fraudulently obtaining relief benefits from the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Earlier today, FBI and Secret Service agents arrested George Marrero of Waco, and Michelle Lynn Goodwin of Waco, without incident. Yesterday, a federal grand jury in Waco, Texas, returned indictments charging the two with one count of making a false, fictitious or fraudulent claim. Upon conviction, each defendant faces up to five years in federal prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine. Allegedly, the defendants applied online last month to receive between \$2,000 and \$4,000 in financial relief from FEMA. In their applications, they falsely claimed Louisiana residency and that they suffered losses due to Hurricane Katrina.

"When so many Americans are opening their hearts, homes and wallets to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina, it is sickening to find some who are using fraud and deception to steal relief money," stated U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton.

These cases were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Secret Service. Assistant United States Attorney Greg Gloff is prosecuting these cases on behalf of the Government.

An indictment is a formal accusation of criminal conduct, not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until convicted through due process of law.

In September 2005, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created the Hurricane Katrina fraud Task Force, designed to deter, investigate and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes such as charity fraud, identity theft, procurement fraud and insurance fraud. The Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force – chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division – includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspector's Office and the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, among others.

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